

this issue until this past weekend had been cursory, half-hearted, and deeply disappointing to those of us who expected a serious, thorough reexamination of this issue.

One hopes that an administration that portrays itself as a global leader on issues of humanitarian law and arms control recognizes this is an opportunity.

A serious review should begin by examining the extensive history of the negotiations that led to the treaty, and the technical issues that were debated and addressed.

It should involve consulting our allies, like Great Britain and Canada, whose militaries have operated in accordance with the treaty's obligations for a decade, including with our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, to determine what their experience has been.

It should involve consulting with the Pentagon, of course, but also with retired senior U.S. military officers and diplomats, many of whom have expressed support for the treaty.

It should involve consulting with Members of Congress, and with the humanitarian and arms control communities who have extensive expertise on all aspects of the treaty and its implementation.

Unfortunately, none of these obvious steps was taken. Instead, an opaque process involving limited consultations with the Pentagon simply resulted in a regurgitation of the Bush administration's talking points.

That is not what we expected of this administration, and I welcome the announcement that a comprehensive review will be carried out.

The United States has not exported anti-personnel mines since 1992.

We have not produced anti-personnel mines since 1997.

And the United States has not used anti-personnel mines since 1991—when many of them malfunctioned.

In effect, we have been in de facto compliance with the treaty for 18 years, with the exception of not yet destroying our stockpile of mines.

And in the interim we have invested millions of dollars to develop alternatives to indiscriminate landmines, to replace them with munitions that include man-in-the-loop technology, so they are not victim-activated.

Indiscriminate landmines, whether persistent mines or those that are designed to self-destruct or deactivate, are nothing more than booby traps. They cannot distinguish between an enemy combatant, a U.S. soldier, a young child, or a woman out collecting firewood. They do not belong in the arsenal of any modern military.

I have supported President Obama and I look forward to supporting him on many issues in the future. I believe this can be one of those issues.

I am confident that after a proper review is conducted, and the President considers the equities, he will conclude, as our allies have, that the humanitarian benefits of banning anti-

personnel landmines far exceed their limited military utility. Ultimately, this is a decision President Obama will need to make himself, as President Wilson did almost a century ago.

I want to commend the Government of Colombia, a country where landmines have taken and continue to take a terrible toll on civilians, for hosting the review conference. Colombia joined the treaty years ago.

I also appreciate that the State Department has sent a team of observers to Cartagena. I hope they use this opportunity not only to highlight the hundreds of millions of dollars the U.S. has provided for humanitarian demining and assistance for mine victims over the years, but also to learn from the delegations of countries that are parties to the treaty.

I want to pay tribute to the leadership of Canada, and my friend Lloyd Axworthy, who as Foreign Minister showed the extraordinary vision and leadership that culminated in the Mine Ban Treaty, and to the other nations that have joined since then.

The treaty has already exceeded the expectations of even its strongest advocates. The number of mine casualties has decreased significantly. The number of countries producing and exporting mines has plummeted.

And at the same time, none of the arguments of the treaty's naysayers have come to pass.

The United States is the most powerful nation on Earth. We don't need these indiscriminate weapons any more than our allies who have abandoned them.

We have not used landmines for many years. We should be leading this effort, not sitting on the sidelines.

It is time for the United States to join the right side of history.

#### ANTI-KLEPTOCRACY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on November 16, 2009, the New York Times published an article entitled "A U.S. Visa, Shouts of Corruption, Barrels of Oil," that describes corruption in Equatorial Guinea, which is a major oil producing country. Specifically, the article highlights the comings and goings of Teodoro Obiang, son of Equatorial Guinea's President, who is also the country's agriculture minister.

Mr. Obiang has been a regular traveler to southern California, where he owns an estate reportedly worth some \$35 million. He also, according to the article, owns a private jet and various luxury automobiles.

How, one might ask, did he acquire such extraordinary wealth, in a country where many children die before the age of 5? Perhaps he is an exceptionally talented businessman, as Equatorial Guinea's Washington lobbyists have suggested, who, when he isn't running the agriculture ministry on a modest government salary, is earning huge profits that can be legitimately explained. It is fair to say that at least,

and probably more, likely is that he has used his family connections to steer a portion of the country's oil revenues into his own pockets.

Mr. Obiang's case is not unique. To the contrary, it is a common practice in countries where the extraction of natural resources—whether oil, gas, timber, or minerals—is the primary source of income. From Angola to Kazakhstan, government officials and their families have abused their power and influence to enrich themselves by siphoning off a portion of the proceeds of the revenues from concessions and leases for the extraction of natural resources, and from the sale of the crude oil or raw timber or minerals.

Billions of dollars that could otherwise have been used to meet the basic needs of the people in these countries—health and education—have instead gone into foreign bank accounts, including in the United States. The beneficiaries have enjoyed lives of comfort and privilege, while their people live in squalor.

The land where oil is drilled, or where gold, cobalt, columbite-tantalite, and other valuable minerals are mined, or where the forest is cut down, is often left in ruins. Soil and water poisoned by oil spills and other toxic chemicals, and drought from deforestation, is left for those who have nowhere else to live, and for future generations.

It is often also the revenues from the exploitation of natural resources that fund the purchase of weapons that fuel civil wars over control of those same resources in these countries. The protracted conflict in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where thousands of civilians, and particularly women and girls, have been brutalized, is a prime example.

Those who have protested this type of corruption, environmental destruction and waste, and exposed the theft by government officials of income from natural resources that is rightfully owed to the people of these countries, have often been harassed, arrested, tortured, and even killed. I remember Ken Saro-Wiwa, who courageously led peaceful protests against the environmental devastation caused by oil spills and gas flaring in Nigeria's delta region. He was ultimately hanged, despite last minute appeals from people around the world, by the corrupt and cruel dictator Sani Abacha. That was in 1995, but the corruption, waste, and abuses continue today in countries where too often the rule of law does not apply to those in power.

In 2004, President Bush issued Presidential Proclamation 7750, which suspended entry to the U.S. of current and former public officials whose corrupt acts have or had serious adverse effects on the national interests of the United States.

In 2007, I included a similar but more targeted provision in the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, currently section 7086 of Public